

upon which diplomatic immunity is based. In the United States, the same principles must apply to those associated with diplomatic missions here in Washington, at the United Nations in New York City, and at consulates in California and throughout our country.

While the concept of diplomatic immunity remains an important underpinning of peaceful diplomacy, it is time, with the exponential growth of the diplomatic corps, that we reexamine the procedures and policies implicit in the doctrine of diplomatic immunity. In short, while diplomats cannot be held hostage by foreign governments through criminal prosecution of themselves, their families or their staffs, that does not mean that civilized countries cannot agree to hold their own diplomatic personnel accountable in their own judicial systems.

I recently met with a now-retired New York City detective, a highly decorated veteran of street wars, who attempted to arrest a young man, the son of a diplomat, who is a serial rapist. I recently met with one of that young man's victims, whose life has never fully returned to normal. I recently met with representatives of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Organization for Victim's Assistance, the National Association of Crime Victims Compensation Boards, the National Black Police Association, Mothers Against Drunk Drivers, and the National Law Enforcement Council.

These officers, victims, and advocates were assembled by constituents of mine in California who are responsible for an important study of cases of diplomatic immunity abuse. In the book by veteran journalist Chuck Ashman and attorney Pamela Terracott, "Diplomatic Crime", they document that the majority of criminal acts which trigger the imposition of diplomatic immunity claims are committed not by Ambassadors or senior ministers, but by their lower ranking staff and family members. They point out that there are cases in which those accused are not only excused but remain in their duty post or are quickly reassigned to another.

I commend Chuck and Pamela for their dedicated research. I thank victims and police for their determination to shed light on abuses. I appreciate the concern on the part of so many significant police and victims support groups for this issue.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, the tragic death of a young woman at the hands of a drunk driver forced the issue of diplomatic immunity back to the front pages earlier this year. In that one case, the government of the accused has waived his immunity and allowed American procedures for justice to move ahead. What is most significant about that decision is how unique it is in the field. In fact, the knee jerk reaction of most nations, including the United States, is to recall those accused of crimes before there is any determinations as to the merits of the charges.

It is my view that the growth in the number of diplomatic personnel, along with media technology that spreads word of crimes across the country in minutes, creates the potential for public outrage that could threaten the entire system of diplomatic immunity sometime in the future. Therefore, I believe that now is the time for Congress to begin an effort to seriously investigate how to improve and protect diplomatic immunity. I recently introduced legislation, H.R. 1236, to get that process underway. I would like to thank Congressman CHRIS

SMITH, the chairman of the International Relations Committee's Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights for incorporating the provisions of H.R. 1236 into H.R. 1253, the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for fiscal years 1998 and 1999, which was reported out of the subcommittee on April 9.

This legislative effort may be of little comfort to the victims of that serial rapist or to the families of those killed by drunken drivers who have not been called to account in any nation, but I believe it is a step in the right direction. The Congress should know when and where these incidents occur. The Congress and the American people should know the disposition of cases involving American officials overseas accused of crimes. I look forward to the Congress moving forward on this issue, to study the reports we are requesting from the State Department, and to take the lead globally in exploring how to balance the needs of diplomacy and the demands of a changing society.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I commend Chuck Ashman and Pamela Terracott for their dedicated research, and thank the victims and those police who have shown such determination to shed light on abuses.

PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON SENDS GREETINGS TO THE THIRD WORLD PARLIAMENTARIANS CONVENTION ON TIBET

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 23, 1997

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, today here in the Rayburn House Office Building the Third World Parliamentarians Convention on Tibet was held. Among those who spoke during this conference were His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the chairman of the House International Relations Committee, our colleague Congressman BENJAMIN A. GILMAN of New York.

President Bill Clinton sent a message of greeting to the parliamentarians of many countries who were assembled here today. Mr. Speaker, I am inserting the message of President Clinton into the RECORD. Our President's powerful affirmation of the importance of human rights is an important statement that I urge all of my colleagues to read:

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, April 17, 1997.

Warm greetings to everyone gathered in Washington, D.C., for the Third World Parliamentarians Convention on Tibet. I am pleased to welcome all the participants, and especially His Holiness the Dalai Lama, whose devotion to the Tibetan people and inspiring advocacy of nonviolence and dialogue have earned the world's lasting admiration.

All Americans cherish the rights guaranteed to us by our founders in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. We have worked to extend them not only to our own citizens, but also to people everywhere, recognizing that these freedoms are the birthright of all humankind. It is heartening that, with the growth and development of the human rights movement, there has been a greater awareness and appreciation that such rights are universal and not limited by political boundaries.

We must continue to speak out whenever human rights are threatened or denied, and I am grateful for the continuing efforts of leaders like you, who have done so much to

advance democracy, human dignity, and religious freedom worldwide.

Best wishes for a successful convention.

BILL CLINTON.

PRESERVING OUR COUNTRY'S IMPORTANT NATURAL AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 23, 1997

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my deep concern that revenues deposited into the Land and Water Conservation Fund [LWCF] are not being spent as they should. Congress created this fund many years ago to pay for the purchase of critical Federal park and recreation lands, but now only spends a small portion of the fund's annual revenues for this purpose.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund was established in 1965 in order to provide a permanent annual funding source for high priority land investments that would help to conserve our Nation's natural resources and ensure our ability to meet Americans' recreational needs. At first the fund's revenues came from proceeds generated by the sales of surplus Federal real property, motorboat fuel taxes, and fees for recreational use of Federal lands. Then in 1968, Congress decided to substantially increase the LWCF's revenues by directing into the fund money yielded from Outer Continental Shelf mineral leasing receipts. As a result, Federal returns from the exploitation of one key natural resource, namely mineral products removed from the Outer Continental Shelf areas, are designated to conserve other key natural resources, namely public parks, wildlife habitats, and other recreational resources.

The LWCF presently receives \$900 million each year, nearly all of which comes from OCS receipts, and until 1981 the vast majority of the fund's holdings were spent on Federal land acquisition. However, over the last decade and a half, Congress has allocated less and less LWCF money for its intended purpose and has, instead, used the fund to offset the Federal deficit. Though in fiscal year 1978 over \$800 million was directed from the LWCF to buy land, in fiscal year 1997 only \$149 million, or 14 percent, of the LWCF was allocated to buy park and recreational property. Since such small percentages of the fund have been used to buy land in recent years, the unspent revenues have accumulated and now total more than \$11 billion.

While we wait to balance the budget, we are losing many opportunities to acquire and protect environmentally sensitive lands and areas that are critical to our present and future recreational needs. Many important lands will soon be lost to real estate development and industrial uses, and unless we purchase them now, we will never have another opportunity to preserve them.

In honor of Earth Day, I would like to call on Congress to allocate this year's LWCF revenues for their intended purpose, to preserve in public ownership our country's most important natural and recreational resources.